

## **6. Secretary Babbitt's Interviews During the DOJ Preliminary Investigation**

Babbitt voluntarily agreed to be interviewed with his lawyers present on Nov. 6, 1997 – prior to his House testimony – by Special Agents of the FBI and lawyers from the Department of Justice in connection with their initial inquiry under the Independent Counsel Act. Regarding his July 14, 1995, meeting with Eckstein, Babbitt said that Eckstein told him they had previous meetings in which they discussed the Hudson matter. Babbitt said he does not dispute that assertion but has no recollection of other meetings.

Babbitt said he recalled being told on July 14 that Eckstein was in the building meeting with Duffy or Leshy to argue his case about the application and that he wanted to see Babbitt. He thinks Duffy or Leshy told him that, and not Eckstein by phone. Babbitt had been told by someone on his staff that the decision had been made, or was about to be made or released. Babbitt was told that Eckstein would be asking for a delay in making the decision. Babbitt saw no reason to intervene. He believed that Eckstein had been given “his chance.”<sup>684</sup> Babbitt did not want to get involved and tell his staff what to do; nevertheless, he made a “spur of the moment decision”<sup>685</sup> to see Eckstein. Babbitt was not inclined to hear another plea, however, and felt he should not have met with Eckstein as soon as the meeting started.

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<sup>683</sup>(...continued)  
misuse personal access," Babbitt responded only that it was "inappropriate" for him to have met with Eckstein. Babbitt G.J. Test., July 7, 1999, at 123.

<sup>684</sup>DOJ Prelim. Babbitt Int. at 4.

<sup>685</sup>*Id.*